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NSC BRIEFING

21 July 1958

CUBA

- I. Castro still has not clarified his position as Prime Minister. He probably will clarify his role at the massive demonstration this Sunday (26 July) celebrating sixth anniversary of his original armed attack against Batista government.
  - A. Nonetheless, he will remain undisputed boss of Cuba.
  - B. Castro has again demonstrated his wide support among masses.
    1. Thousands of peasants, armed with machetes, already entering Havana for Sunday's demonstration.
  - C. Castro's ouster of President Urrutia, however, has probably weakened him with important middle class, where respect for democracy always strongest.
  - D. It also likely to be used by anti-Castro plotters further to justify attempts against the regime, though Urrutia had little personal support.
    1. Government increasing its arrests of alleged counterrevolutionaries.
    2. Sources among Cuban exiles in Dominican Republic are still claiming readiness to invade Cuba this month.
  - E. New president, 40-year old lawyer Osvaldo Dorticos, likely to be compliant Castro tool.
    1. Has energetically denied being Communist and in past was closely associated with moderate pro-US Jose Miro Cardona, Castro's predecessor as Prime Minister.

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2. Was prominent in National Bar Association during Batista regime and led that group in strong attacks on regime; exiled just prior to Batista's fall.
11. Castro's action against Urrutia clearly helps Communists.
- A. Castro more committed than ever to public position against action to control Communists.
    1. One of Castro's chief charges against Urrutia was that former President's strong anti-Communist speech of 13 July gave support to attacks by reactionaries, including some in US Senate, who using false charges of Communist penetration in government in plot against Cuba. Urrutia's action therefore bordered on treason.
    2. Diaz Lanz case, which deeply upset Castro, probably contributed to Urrutia's ouster.
  - B. Immediately after Urrutia's resignation, Communist leader Lazaro Pena called for formation of "truly revolutionary government" with Communist participation.
    1. This demand unlikely to be acceded to, at least for now.
  - C. Some indications that Urrutia's ouster may increase influence of Raul Castro.
    1. Raul, who as chief of armed forces has facilitated Communist penetration of military, reported by several sources to have been pressing Fidel to oust Urrutia after arguments with former president over appointments.
    2. Since Urrutia's resignation, Raul has been observed attending cabinet sessions which normally would not be the case for military chief.
    3. Fidel has said that Raul would succeed him as "Leader" of the Revolution.